

## 8 Getting a job

### Background

Like many aspects of the profession, the cabin crew job interview will vary between airlines. This final unit gives an insight into what this may involve.

Most frequently, the application process begins with attendance at an open house interview. This is done through internet and newspaper advertisements. The open house interview for flight attendant jobs is a general information session and gives the airline a chance to screen a large group of potential candidates in one place. There are several ways of conducting this type of interview, but typically applicants are asked to fill out a questionnaire and will be given a short speech about the airline by a flight attendant representative. Applicants may also be asked at this point to give a brief statement describing their background and work history. Each person may then be required to take a written test which includes some customer service questions. Those who are successful in the test will be asked to remain. The remaining group will be asked to speak or read in front of the group. Usually, the topic deals in some way with customer service. Sometimes applicants will be provided with scenarios relating to job situations. There are sometimes individual interviews at the open house session and some airlines also give brief psychological tests as well.

Follow-up interviews consist of techniques such as one-on-ones, panel interviews, return interviews, video tests, and written tests. They may also include more group interviews.

Entry requirements do vary between airlines, but, in general, applicants need to be able to demonstrate a good standard of literacy and numeracy. Some airlines require applicants to have English and Maths at GCSE grade C or above (or national equivalent). Qualifications in foreign languages, travel, leisure and tourism can also be useful, as can knowledge of first aid. Airlines set requirements for the physical characteristics of applicants: a minimum age of 18, a specified weight in proportion to height, good physical fitness (including the ability to swim a specified distance), and good eye sight. Cabin crew applicants are also subject to criminal records checks for airport security clearance. A proficient level of English is a standard requirement.

Airlines may also prefer applicants who have experience of working in a customer service environment, linguistic ability, and an out-going personality. They might also be required to relocate. Flight attendants must look neat and professional. Typically, airlines do not permit visible tattoos, body piercings (except in the ears), certain make-up, jewellery and hairstyles, or poorly manicured hands.

The greatest attraction of the profession seems to be the ability to travel. There are also chances for advancement and change within the industry. Many flight attendants move into a supervisory role or become a flight attendant recruiter, travelling around to various cities and interviewing prospective flight attendants. Another position into which a flight attendant can move is that of a flight attendant instructor. A flight attendant may also eventually move into other related areas of the company, such as catering, risk management, marketing or human resources.

In this unit we see a few examples of some of the activities involved in a cabin crew interview, such as group assessments. One of the other common tasks is the behavioural question. Here are a few examples. You may wish to use these with your students:

- 1 Give an example of a situation where you had to handle a disgruntled customer and the outcome.
- 2 Give an example of a situation where you were not being supported by your employer and how you handled it.
- 3 Give an example of a situation where you had to go the extra mile to please a customer.
- 4 Give an example of a situation where you worked as a team to complete a task.
- 5 Give an example of when you were glad you had checked something

Another type is the scenario, where the applicant is given a situation that he or she may encounter while working as a flight attendant. Here are some common scenario questions with some suggested answers. You may wish to ask students to role play these during your lessons.

**Question 1** A passenger in the economy cabin says he noticed that the passengers in the first class cabin were given newspapers and he would like one too.

**Answer** You should explain to the passenger that one of the amenities offered to first class passengers is a complimentary newspaper and that in reality they are paying for that paper because of the increased ticket price. You should also say that you will do your best to accommodate him by finding a newspaper for him, perhaps from someone in the economy cabin that has finished reading their copy.

**Question 2** A woman changes her infant's nappy during the meal service and asks that you dispose of the dirty nappy for her.

**Answer** You should advise the passenger that you would be happy to dispose of the item at the conclusion of the meal service. You could also recommend that the passenger dispose of the nappy herself in the lavatory. In either case, you should recommend that she put it inside an airsickness bag prior to disposal.

**Question 3** A man is making a business call on the in-flight telephone. He complains to you that he cannot hear because the baby next to him won't stop crying.

**Answer** If the flight is not completely full, you should ask the passenger if he would like to change seats and move to a quieter location. If he is not willing to move, you could also ask the person with the baby if she would mind moving. If it is a full flight, you might consider having one of them swap seats with another passenger. If all else fails, you could ask the passenger with the baby to temporarily leave the man alone so he could make his call, perhaps walking the baby up and down the aisle.

## Jargon Buster

A **job description** is a list of the general tasks, or functions, and responsibilities of a position. It may often include who the position reports to, specifications such as the qualifications or skills needed by the person in the job, and a salary range. Job descriptions are usually narrative, but some may instead comprise a simple list of competencies. Job descriptions are based on objective information obtained through job analysis, an understanding of the competencies and skills required to accomplish needed tasks, and the needs of the organization.

The **key responsibilities** may be a separate document, but is usually part of the Job Description. It will list the main responsibilities that are required for the post. This will often include a standard to be achieved.

The **minimum requirements** are the essentials needed for consideration for the post. Without these, candidates will not usually be considered for interview.

The **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**, also known as a resumé in American English, is presented by the applicant and outlines aspects of the applicant's history. It will include personal details, a personal profile, and an outline of key qualities, as well as skills and career objectives, education, additional training, work experience, interests and references.

## Activity Assistant

- 18** The following are some example sentences in the forms of the four types of conditional sentences. Teachers may want to give the first half (or second half, in some cases) of the sentences to students who are having difficulty thinking of examples

### The Zero Conditional

If you need any testimonials, I have some with me.

If I say I am going to do something, I always do it.

If I see that someone is in need of help, I always go over to them.

If someone is getting angry, I find out exactly what the problem is first.

### The First Conditional

If I get the job, I'll hand in my notice as soon as possible.

If I am successful, will you want me to start straight away?

If things turn out well, I'll finish university in June.

If I don't get the job, I'll probably look for similar work.

### The Second Conditional

If I was in that situation, I would have to think quickly but calmly.

If I noticed something missing, I would report it to the senior staff member immediately.

If I got the job, I would be ready to relocate.

If a passenger looked sick, I would find out exactly what was wrong.

### The Third Conditional

If I'd wanted to stay in publishing, I wouldn't have resigned.

If I had taken Science more seriously at school, I might have understood it more.

If I hadn't had some experience of customer care, I would have found that part of the interview difficult.

If I hadn't stayed calm, the situation would have been much worse.